

VZCZCXRO0301  
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #3188/01 2420923  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 300923Z AUG 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6569  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC//  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003188

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/29/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS OF SHIA IMAM IN HILLAH

Classified By: Rule of Law Coordinator James Yellin for Reason 1.4 (d).

#### SUMMARY AND COMMENT

¶1. (C) Sayed Imam Kazwini, a Shia cleric who is close to secular politician Ayad Allawi and who has been well-disposed to the U.S., said during a meeting in Hillah that:

-- Iranian influence in Iraq has become "intolerable."

-- U.S. support for the current Iraqi government amounts to support for an extremist regime like the Taliban.

-- Quick and well-publicized completion of U.S.-funded projects that improve the quality of life for Iraqis will help undercut growing Iranian influence.

¶2. (C) Embassy Rule of Law Coordinator emphasized that the U.S. supports a democratic Iraq and the duly elected unity government.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: The remarks of Kazwini echo those of many supporters of a secular state, who feel threatened by the specter of an Islamist state in Iraq similar to that in Iran.  
END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

#### THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT

¶4. (C) Kazwini met with Embassy Rule of Law (ROL) Coordinator, PRT Babil ROL Coordinator, and Embassy Deputy Legal Advisor in Hillah in the southern province of Babil on August 13.

¶5. (C) Kazwini said that:

-- The current government of Iraq is led by "fools, former exiles who know nothing about the country, and religious extremists." Provincial councils are comprised of "thugs and idiots," who will not help the Iraqis or the US.

-- U.S. support for the Iraqi government amounts to support for a religious extremist regime like the Taliban in Afghanistan.

-- The US made a grave mistake by "empowering" Shia Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who is not qualified to play a political role.

-- Liberal and nationalist parties cannot compete with Iraqi religious parties, which get money, weapons, training and other support from neighboring countries, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

-- The US should disband the current government, rule Iraq with a military dictatorship for at least six months, and form a "national salvation government" when security is restored and militias are disbanded.

## IRANIAN INFLUENCE

¶6. (C) Kazwini said that Iranian influence in Iraq has reached "intolerable levels." He claimed that:

-- Iran controls the Shia parliamentary alliance of the SCIRI and Dawa parties, and provides SCIRI with five million dollars per month for salaries alone. Iran also influences Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and his Jaysh al-Mehdi militia.

-- Quick and well-publicized completion of U.S.-funded projects that improve the quality of life for Iraqis will help undercut growing Iranian influence.

## OTHER SUBJECTS

¶7. (C) Kazwini said the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) did not carry out its duties independently during the December 2005 parliamentary elections; rather, he claimed, it was strongly influenced by Iranian intelligence and by pro-Iranian Iraqi politicians.

¶8. (C) Kazwini said the US will have to use force to disarm and disband militias. Dialogue with the political parties that run the militias will not be enough, he noted.

## REMARKS OF ROL COORDINATOR

¶9. ( ) ROL Coordinator responded that:

-- The US supports a democratic Iraq and the duly elected unity government. International observers found the December 2005 elections to be free and fair.

BAGHDAD 00003188 002 OF 002

-- The Government of Iraq, not the United States, must govern Iraq.

-- We agree that there should be no militias and that only the country's legitimate security forces should be armed.

-- Iraqi parties should pursue their aims through peaceful, democratic means.

## BIO NOTE

¶10. (C) Kazwini, who participated in the 1991 uprising against former president Saddam Hussein and subsequently remained in Iraq, is a Shia cleric and vocal critic of both the Sunni and Shia religious parties that constitute the current government. He is an ally of secular politician and former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, but declined to run on the Iraqi National List of Allawi during the December 2005 elections. Kazwini is popular in Hillah, but enjoys less support elsewhere in Babil province and does not have a significant national following.

SPECKHARD